

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PDEV PBOR ET SO CU UR

SUBJ: CUBANS CRITICIZE OWEN'S SPEECH ON AFRICA

1. GRANAMA, APRIL 7, PUBLISHES DECLARATION BY CUBAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS (MINREX) STRONGLY CRITICIZING APRIL 5 MANSION HOUSE SPEECH BY BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY DAVID OWEN. BRITISH CHARGE WAS CALLED INTO MINREX AT 11:30 PM LOCAL TIME, APRIL 6, TO RECEIVE FROM FIRST VICE MINISTER ANNILLO COPY OF DECLARATION WHICH WAS CIRCULATED TO PRESS AT MIDNIGHT. ANNILLO WAS TERSE AND COMMENTED ONLY THAT GOC WAS EXTENDING BASIC COURTESY (WHICH BY IMPLICATION, BRITISH HAD NOT).

2. DECLARATION SAYS THAT OWEN BROKE "THE MOST ELEMENTAL NORMS OF PROTOCOLARY RESPECT" IN ATTACKING CUBAN POLICY ON HORN. MINREX SAYS THAT OWEN, "DEFORMED" BY BRITIAN'S COLONIAL PAST, IS NOT CAPABLE OF APPRECIATING "THE NOBLE AND DISINTERESTED ROLE THAT SMALL PEOPLES - AMONG THEM CUBA - PLAY TODAY WHEN THEY FIGHT TOGETHER WITH THEIR BROTHERS." MINREX ASSERTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT THE AFRICAN AND NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

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SUPPORT CUBAN POLICY.

3. MINREX CONTINUES THAT THE UK HAS NO RIGHT TO CONCERN ITSELF WITH "INTERNAL SITUATION OF ETHIOPIA, INCLUDING THE PROBLEM OF ERITREA, WHICH STRICTLY CONCERN THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT" AND WHICH "IN ANY CASE WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED AMONG THE PRATIES INVOLVED IN THIS HISTORIC

PROCESS." MINREX SAYS THAT OWEN IS "IRRESPONSIBLE" AND SHOWS "BAD FAITH" WHEN HE "ECHOES ALL THE LIES THAT IMPERIALISM AND ITS SPOKESMEN DIVULGE ON THIS PROBLEM".

4. TURNING TO ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA, MINREX SAYS THAT OWEN "TRIES TO DISFIGURE" THE CUBAN POSITION WHEN HE "MAKES NOISE ABOUT THE HYPOTHETICAL DANGER THAT CUBA WILL IMPOSE A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS WITH PARTICIPATION OF CUBAN TROOPS." MINREX SAYS THAT OWEN PERPETRATES THIS "GROSS HOAX" DESPITE THE FACT THAT CUBA'S ACTUAL POSITION HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY REITERATED TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN CUBA.

5. MINREX CONCLUDES ITS DECLARATION BY "VIGOROUSLY REJECTING THE EXTRAORDINARY ARROGANCE WITH WHICH OWEN --- TRIES TO DISGUISE HIS NEO-COLONIALIST INTENTIONS IN AFRICA."

6. BEGIN COMMENT: MINREX HARSH RHETORIC, IN REPLY TO THE OWEN SPEECH, WAS NOT UNEXPECTED, BUT WHAT CUBANS LEAVE SAID AND UNSAID IN THEIR STATEMENT IS OF INTEREST. UNLIKE POSITION ON ZIMBABWE AND MANIBIA ON WHICH CUBANS APPEAR TO RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF USE OF CUBAN TROOPS TO IMPOSE MILITARY SOLUTION, MINREX STOPS SHORT OF DENYING OWEN'S ASSERTION THAT "WE MAY YET SEE CUBAN COMBAT TROOPS" FIGHTING IN ERITREA. MINREX STATES SIMPLY THAT ERITREA IS A MATTER THAT CONCERN ONLY ETHIOPIA, THOUGH A VERBAL GESTURE IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MADE TOWARD DESIRABILITY OF DISCUSSIONS AMONG PARTIES INVOLVED.

7. EVEN ON NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE, WHERE OWEN REFERRED TO POSSIBLE USE OF CUBAN TROOPS "TO UNDERMINE CURRENT TALKS," CUBANS, RATHER THAN DENYING ANY CURRENT AND FUTURE MILITARY INVOLVEMENT WITH PATRIOTIC FRONT, ONLY DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY OF CUBAN IMPOSITION OF MILITARY SOLUTION. WHILE IMPLICATION IS CLEARLY THAT CUBANS WOULD PREFER TO AVOID MASSIVE MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, THEY DO NOT WRITE OFF MORE LIMITED MILITARY INVOLVEMENT OPTIONS, AT LEAST IN AUXILIARY ROLE.
END COMMENT.

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